

In the Office Action of May 4, 2001, the Examiner has maintained the rejection of the subject matter of Claims 1, 2 and 5-7 as being obvious over the combination of Kato et al. (JP 10-204,355) (hereinafter "the '355 reference") and U.S. Patent No. 4,718,340 issued to Love, III (hereinafter "the '340 patent"). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Essentially, the Examiner contends that the '355 reference teaches all of the limitations of the claims except for imaging the printing plate in press. The Examiner, though, relies upon the '340 patent to teach the desirability of imaging a printing plate in press and therefore asserts that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the method of the '355 reference with the step of imaging the plate in press in view of the '340 patent to achieve the claimed invention.

Applicants respectfully assert that one skilled in the art would not have been motivated to combine the '355 reference and the '340 patent to achieve a method of lithographic printing which comprises forming an image on a printing plate precursor mounted on a plate cylinder of a printing press in an ink-jet system by ejecting oil-based ink utilizing an electrostatic field to form the image thereby preparing a printing plate and then carrying out printing with a printing press using the obtained printing plate as taught by the present invention.

First, the '355 reference provides that the preparation of a printing plate and the printing are carried out by using a separate printing press. In particular, the '355 reference describes the preparation of an offset printing plate using an oil-based ink for an ink-jet recording system at paragraphs [0063] to [0083] and shows such an offset printing plate in

the drawings. Further, the '355 reference provides that by using the device system (Fig. 1) to carry out the preparation of the offset printing plate based on the information of the image to be formed, droplets of ink are sprayed from the head 10 of the ink-jet recording device 1 onto the master 2 to prepare the plate-making master in which the image has been formed, and subsequently a desensitizing treatment is carried out to prepare the printing plate. The '355 reference also provides that in offset printing using the obtained printing plate, the printing of about 10,000 sheets can be performed. Examples 1 to 15 (paragraphs [0097] to [0137]) of the '355 reference further describe preparation of a printing plate and the printing. Paragraph [0101] of the '355 reference, though, provides that the printing is carried out using the obtained printing plate by a whole automatic printing press (AM-2850). Thus, the '355 reference provides that the preparation of a printing plate and the printing are carried out by using a separate printing press.

Secondly, the '340 patent is directed to a stencil printing press which is entirely different from the present invention. In particular, the stencil printing press of the '340 patent provides for the use of mesh as a plate cylinder and a printing plate formed by plugging the pores or holes of the mesh. Also, as the image quality depends upon the pores of the mesh, the image quality becomes low and thus, a high quality image due to the means plugging the pores is not required. However, in lithographic printing, a printing plate is formed by forming a hydrophobic image on a hydrophilic printing plate. Accordingly, to obtain printed matter having a high quality image in lithographic printing, a printing plate having a high quality image is required as an image-forming means.

Further, the '340 patent provides for the use of an optical image-forming means such as a laser which is expensive and bulky for obtaining a high quality image. The

present invention, though, provides for a high quality image in addition to a low cost and miniaturization by using as an image-forming means, a specific ink jet in which the high quality image drawing can be obtained by ejecting a concentrated ink which would not be obvious to one skilled in the art.

In addition, as Applicants previously argued in the Amendment dated April 13, 2001, the '340 patent discloses that an image is directly formed on the surface of the plate cylinder of the printing press which is entirely different from the method of the present invention. u

Accordingly, one skilled in the art would certainly not have been motivated to combine the '355 reference and the '340 patent to achieve the claimed invention. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Also in the Office Action, the Examiner has maintained the rejection of the subject matter of Claims 3, 4 and 8-17 as being obvious over the combination of the '355 reference and the '340 patent and further in view of either Adler (EP 641,648), Masaaki (JP 58-147,373), U.S. Patent No. 4,555,712 issued to Arway et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,363,132 issued to Ikkatai, U.S. Patent No. 5,322,015 issued to Gasparrini and U.S. Patent No. 5,988,782 issued to Miura et al.

Claims 3, 4 and 8-17 are directly or indirectly dependent upon Claim 1. Thus, as Claim 1 is clearly patentable over the combination of the '355 reference and the '340 patent as discussed above, dependent Claims 3, 4 and 8-17 are also patentable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 3, 4 and 8-17.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance and favorable reconsideration and prompt notice of allowance are earnestly solicited.

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375 Park Avenue, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10152
Tel. (212) 521-5400
JEG/SRP:km

Respectfully submitted,
REED SMITH, LLP

By: 

Jules E. Goldberg - Reg. No. 24,408